

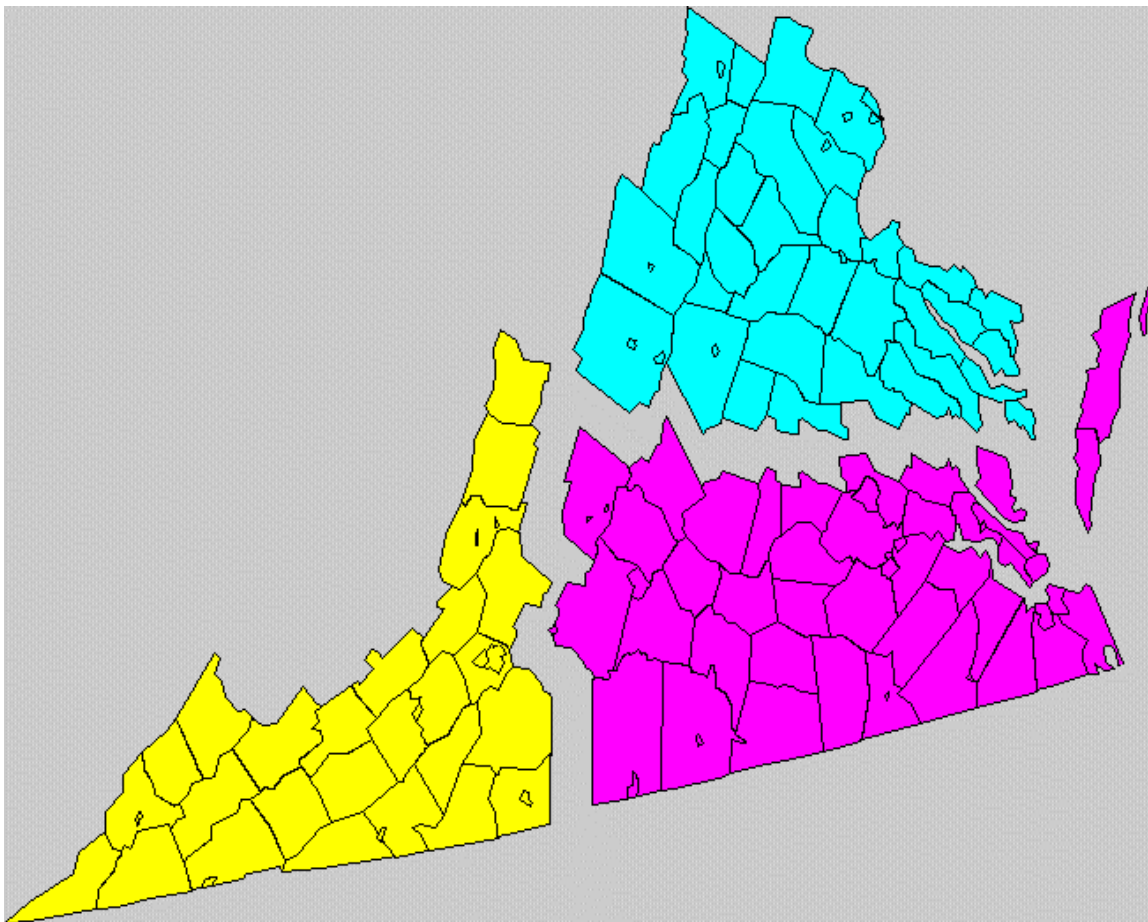
Office of National Drug Control Policy

Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse

State of Virginia

Profile of Drug Indicators

May 2000



ONDCP Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse staff compiled this profile by using the most recent data available from open sources. The data presented are as accurate as the sources from which they were drawn. The information contained in this profile should not be used to rank or compare States or jurisdictions, due to differences in data collection and reporting methods.

Virginia

The following profile contains information on demographics, political figures, funding, programs, crime, drug use, drug trafficking, and enforcement statistics.

Demographics¹

- Population: 6,189,000 (1990 census), 6,873,000 (1999 estimate)
- Gender: 49% Male, 51% Female
- Race/Ethnicity: White 77.4%; Black 18.8%; American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut .2%; Asian or Pacific Islander 2.6%; Hispanic 2.6%
- Age: 18 years and under 24.2%; 65 years and older: 11.3%
- Percent of the Population living below the poverty level: 8.8%

Politics²

- U.S. Senate: Charles Robb (D), John Warner (R)
- U.S. Representatives: Herbert Bateman (R), Owen Pickett (D), Bobby Scott (D), Norman Sisisky (D), Virgil Goode (D)
- Governor: Jim Gilmore
- Lt. Governor: John Hager
- Attorney General: Mark L. Earley
- HIDTA Director: Thomas Carr

Programs/Initiatives

- Four community coalitions in Virginia were awarded funds from the FY 99 Drug Free Community Support Program. The coalitions were the city of Newport News (\$84,997), Fauquier CADRE, Inc. in Warrenton (\$94,508), New River Valley Community Services in Blacksburg (\$97,615), and the James Barry Robinson Institute in Norfolk (\$89,953).³
- The Washington D.C./Baltimore HIDTA was designated in 1994. Arlington, Fairfax, Prince William, and Loudoun Counties, and City of Alexandria participate in the HIDTA. Initiatives of the HIDTA specific to Virginia include:
Street Terrorist Initiative, VA -- This initiative, supervised by ATF, conducts long term, complex investigations targeting street gangs and other drug trafficking organizations with particular emphasis on firearms violations and firearms-related violence. It targets outlaw motorcycle gangs and notorious youth street gangs that continue to disrupt the quality of life for residents of neighborhoods where they operate.
Northern Virginia Drug Initiative -- This initiative, supervised by DEA, targets mid and upper-level drug distributors and organizations operating in the Northern Virginia area with emphasis on cocaine HCL, heroin, crack cocaine and dangerous drugs. The initiative coordinates its operations with those of other agencies in the region, principally from Northern Virginia, focusing on sources of supply in the District of Columbia and Southern Maryland.

Northern Virginia Regional Crack Initiative -- This initiative, supervised by DEA, targets street-level / mid-level crack cocaine distribution organizations operating in Northern Virginia with an emphasis on gangs and violent crime. The initiative coordinates its operations with those of other agencies in the region, principally from Washington, DC and Prince George's County.

- Intensified Drug Enforcement Assistance (IDEA).⁴

Special state fund coming from fee assessments collected in certain misdemeanor and felony cases. The purpose of this grant program is to provide additional resources for the apprehension and prosecution of persons engaged in drug trafficking and other drug crime related activities to local Virginia jurisdictions. Applicants may apply for IDEA funding to support one of the following program areas:

Interdisciplinary Task Force: projects enhance, through joint participation and collaboration by many agencies of local government, efforts to control violent and drug-related crime.

Community Policing: projects encourage police-citizen partnerships in addressing violent and drug-related crime thoroughly and effectively.

Drug and Organized Crime Intelligence: projects capture, analyze, and provide intelligence from all sources to assist in the investigation of illicit drug trafficking and criminal organizations.

Major Drug Violator/Repeat Drug Offender Investigation: projects attempt to prevent the commission of new crimes by known major drug violators and repeat offenders who are on bail, on probation or parole, or who have been released from prison upon completion of their sentences.

Enhancing Drug Enforcement and Prosecution: projects enhance the investigation of trafficking in illegal drugs and the apprehension and prosecution of persons violating drug laws.

Juvenile Officers Narcotics Unit: projects attempt to prevent the commission of drug-related crimes by juveniles and/or the commission of new drug distribution crimes by juveniles who are released on probation.

- The city of Charlottesville became a Weed and Seed site in the spring of 1998. Charlottesville Weed and Seed special initiative program: The Safe-Haven, to be located at Clark Elementary School, will operate after school and on Saturdays. Community empowerment and mentoring child advocacy will be the focus of prevention and intervention programs for youth and adults. Using desktop publishing and other venues, participants can plan, create and produce marketable products and services. In addition, the Safe-Haven will offer a tutorial program, enrichment activities, recreation, etc. Program Coordinators and specially trained volunteer advocate-mentors will play an essential role at the Safe-Haven.
- Virginia Exile is the Commonwealth's tough new program which carries bail restrictions and imposes a mandatory minimum sentence of five years in a Virginia prison for those who: have a prior conviction for a violent felony and are convicted of possessing a firearm; are convicted of possessing a firearm on school property with the intent to use it, or displaying it in a threatening manner; are convicted of possessing a firearm and Schedule I or II drugs such as cocaine or heroin, or convicted of possessing more than a pound of marijuana with the intent to sell. Virginia Exile is designed to build upon the success of Project Exile, a federal

program started in Richmond in 1997. By prosecuting illegal gun offenses in federal court, Project Exile has helped to reduce gun violence in Richmond, Virginia by 40 percent, according to federal and city officials.⁵

Crime and Drug-Related Crime

- The Total Crime Index in Virginia fell 4.8% between 1997 and 1998. Both the Violent and Property Crime Index dropped between 1997 and 1998 by 4.9% and 4.8% respectively.
- In Virginia, in 1998 there were 24,970 drug abuse violations, 2,714 involved people under the age of 18.⁶

Arrests in Virginia in 1998

Offense	Total All Ages	Total Under 18
Murder and non-negligent manslaughter	287	25
Forcible Rape	625	86
Robbery	1,877	421
Aggravated Assault	5,947	712
Burglary	5,551	1,792
Larceny-theft	28,222	8,032
Motor Vehicle Theft	2,393	926
Arson	378	204
Drug Abuse Violations	24,970	2,714
Driving Under the Influence	26,649	357
Liquor Laws	14,340	2,244
Drunkenness	34,130	546

Drugs⁷

- Between 1988 and 1998, Virginia's drug arrest rate increased by 60%, with most of this increase occurring during 1994 and 1995. In terms of numbers of drug arrests made statewide, slightly more than 16,000 drug arrests were made in 1988, compared to more than 30,000 in 1998. Coping with drug crime places major demands on the resources Virginia's criminal justice system. For example, law enforcement agencies reported making 30,344 drug offense arrests in 1998, almost three times the number of arrests reported for all violent offenses in that year. During 1998, persons convicted for drug offenses made up one quarter of all the new inmates committed to the Virginia Department of Corrections. Virginia's drug arrest rate of 441 per 100,000 people is higher than the rates for three of the five border States. Kentucky, Tennessee and West Virginia had arrest rates below Virginia's rate.
- Generally, rural localities in Virginia's Central, Southside and Northern Neck regions had the lowest total drug arrest rates, whereas cities tended to have the highest rates. However many rural localities in these regions had increases in drug arrest rates over the last decade. This may indicate the spread of illicit drug activity from urban areas to more rural communities in the Commonwealth.
- Overall, arrest rates for both adult and juvenile offenders increased from 1988 to 1998. Adult and juvenile arrest trends differed depending on type of drug involved.

For both sale and possession of Schedule I/II drugs, adults arrest rates were consistently higher than juvenile rates. For both sale and possession of marijuana, adult rates were higher than juvenile rates between 1988 and 1993, but beginning in 1994 juvenile arrest rates exceeded those of adults. Arrest rates for possession of Schedule I/II drugs were the most stable. The greatest overall increases occurred among juveniles arrested for marijuana offenses. Juvenile arrests for marijuana sale increased by 167% from 1988 to 1998, and marijuana possession arrests increased by 222%. The smallest increase occurred among adults arrested for possession of Schedule I/II drugs. Rates increased by only 13% from 1988 to 1998.

- A study of homicide and narcotic sales arrest rates among young males age 15 to 24 in three major metropolitan areas (Richmond, Norfolk, and Northern Virginia Areas) of Virginia revealed a link to drug sales and crime. The study revealed the disproportionate involvement of young adults in arrests for both narcotics sales and for homicides in Virginia's three largest MSAs from 1986 through 1998. Males 15 to 24 represented only about eight percent of the population in these areas, but accounted for about 25% to almost 50% of all the narcotics arrests and from about 30% to 60% of all the murder arrests.

The percentage of young males involved in narcotics sales arrests doubled in the ten years from 1986 to 1995. In 1986, 24% of the narcotics sales arrests in the three MSAs were arrests of males age 15 to 24. By 1995, 48% of those arrested for narcotics sales were young males. From 1996 through 1998, this percentage declined slightly to between 41% and 45% of all arrests.

The percentage of young males involved in murder arrests followed a similar pattern. In 1986, young males comprised 30% of the individuals arrested for murder in the three MSAs. However, by 1993, young males had doubled to 60% of all murder arrests. From 1994 through 1998 the percentage of young males arrested declined somewhat, but still remained above the levels prior to 1990.

Trafficking and Seizures

- There were a total of 15,480 marijuana plants eradicated in Virginia during 1998⁸

Number of Marijuana Plants Eradicated in Virginia, 1998		
Outdoor Operations	Plots eradicated	409
	Cultivated plants eradicated	14,352
	Ditchweed eradicated	429
Indoor Operations	Grows seized	34
	Plants eradicated	699
Total	Total plants eradicated	15,480
	Number of arrests	165
	Number of weapons seized	25
	Value of assets seized	\$12,175

Consequences of Use

- In Norfolk, Virginia during 1998 there were a total of 45 drug-related deaths this was down 35.7% from 70 deaths in 1997.⁹

Distribution of Drug Related Deaths, Norfolk 1997-98

Characteristics	1997	1998
Deaths	70	45
GENDER		
Male	48	33
Female	19	11
RACE/ETHNICITY		
White	46	32
Black	24	13
AGE		
6 to 17	1	1
18 to 25	7	3
26 to 34	21	8
35 and up	41	33
SELECTED DRUGS		
Alcohol in Combo	38	19
Cocaine	27	17
Heroin/Morphine	28	24
Marijuana/Hashish	7	1
Methadone	1	0
Methamphetamine	0	0
PCP	0	0
Total Drug Mentions	162	109

Enforcement

- In 1998 the state of Virginia employed a total of 19,412 people in law enforcement. The total number of male police officers was 13,761 and female was 1,502. The number of civilian employees was 4,149.¹⁰
- The Drug Enforcement Division (DED) of the Virginia State Police maintains many drug enforcement programs including:¹¹
DED Regional Field Offices -- Seven DED regional field offices perform operational narcotics enforcement investigations, as well as support special operations (undercover, wire intercept, marijuana eradication, initiated by other law enforcement entities. Of the 111 special agents available for enforcement and task force duties at seven field offices, 57 performed routine enforcement duties, and 54 were assigned to task forces or to other special assignments. From January 1, 1998, through December 31, 1998, the field offices participated in 1,396 investigations that yielded \$18 million in seized narcotics; \$284,458 in seized currency; and 876 persons arrested on 1,123 felony and misdemeanor charges.

In addition, 450 persons were arrested on 540 felony and misdemeanor charges in cases where DED assisted other agencies. The DED also seized 22 vehicles and 114 weapons.

Multi-Jurisdictional Task Forces -- The DED participated in 24 state/local multi-jurisdictional task forces, encompassing 93 local jurisdictions during this period. Thirty State Police special agents and 140 local officers were assigned to state/local task forces. During this period, the multi-jurisdictional task forces participated in 3,052 investigations that accounted for \$9.2 million in illicit drug seizures; \$549,657 in seized US currency; and 2,061 persons arrested on 2,754 charges. In addition, task forces assisted their agencies in cases that resulted in 1,119 persons arrested on 1,440 charges. These task forces also seized 38 vehicles and 150 weapons

Federal Task Forces -- The DED participated in 7 federal narcotics task forces during the first half of 1998. Seven special agents, an assistant special agent in-charge and officers from local police departments and agents from the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the Internal Revenue Service were assigned to participate. From January 1 through December 31, 1998, the federal joint task forces conducted 46 investigations that accounted for \$21.9 million in drug seizures, \$286,259 in seized US currency, and 119 persons arrested on 144 charges. These task forces also assisted in 72 arrests on 84 charges. Also seized were 11 vehicles and 12 weapons.

Narcotics Interdiction Unit -- The Narcotics Interdiction Unit was formed to stem the flow of narcotics into Virginia by focusing on interdicting narcotics being moved by public transportation and on the interstate system throughout the Commonwealth. The Unit consists of four independent teams to facilitate a simultaneous focus of efforts on all trafficking methods. Each team is staffed with an assistant special agent-in-charge, three sergeants, four special agents, and eight uniformed troopers. Two teams are now in place in Richmond, one in Southwest Virginia and one in Tidewater. During this period, 634 interdiction assignments resulted in opening 135 criminal cases with 171 persons arrested on 270 criminal charges, the seizures of \$8.7 million worth of illicit drugs and \$110,966 in US currency. Also seized were 13 vehicles and 16 weapons.

Multi-jurisdictional Narcotics Interdiction Unit -- On September 24, 1996, the State Police formed the Richmond Metro Interdiction Narcotics Task Force, including Chesterfield County, Henrico County, Richmond and Petersburg Police Departments; Hanover County Sheriff's Office, Richmond International Airport Police Department, and DEA. From January 1, 1998 through December 31, 1998, the Task Force seized 730 pounds of marijuana, 29 pounds, 6 ounces of cocaine, 10 ounces of heroin, and 1 ounce of methamphetamine along with LSD and steroids, all having a street value of over \$3.3 million. Arrests included 87 suspects on 137 charges. Two vehicles, eight firearms and \$157,902 in US Currency have also been seized.

Marijuana Eradication/Operation Grand Slam -- The Commonwealth remains a prime location for the cultivation of the marijuana plant. Virginia's domestically grown marijuana has the potential for being a major cash crop. With DEA funding, the Department of State Police, along with assistance of other state and local law enforcement agencies, conducts a regular program to eradicate domestically grown marijuana. During this period, 14,352 plants and 44 pounds of bulk marijuana were

found by the Department of State Police and local law enforcement agencies in 409 outdoor plots. In addition, 34 indoor growing operations were destroyed, resulting in the seizure of an additional 699 plants and 65 pounds of bulk marijuana. Marijuana eradication operations resulted in 165 arrests. Seizures included 25 weapons and currency, vehicles and other personal property valued at \$14,175. Considering the estimated yield of consumable marijuana from each plant, the cash value of marijuana not reaching the streets as a result of eradication would be in excess of \$14.4 million.

Governor's Initiative Against Narcotics Trafficking (G.I.A.N.T.) -- The G.I.A.N.T. mission is to facilitate and assure coordination and cooperation among member agencies. Five special agents are assigned to G.I.A.N.T. The five facets of the G.I.A.N.T. mission are: (1) Development of intelligence pertaining to domestically grown marijuana, both indoor and outdoor, with the eradication of this marijuana and successful prosecution of the growers. (2) Development of intelligence concerning air smuggling into Virginia by the use of contacts to monitor suspicious activities of all known airports in the Commonwealth, and by locating clandestine airstrips and identifying users. (3) Reduction of the supply of illegal drugs entering and being transported within the Commonwealth by interdicting drug shipments via land, air, and waterway. (4) Development of procedures that eliminate duplication of activities and breakdowns in communication among the various state agencies and law enforcement authorities. (5) Utilization of the resources of county and city law enforcement agencies to the maximum extent possible.

There were 347 G.I.A.N.T. operations during this period and they resulted in 73 arrests, the seizure of \$10.1 million worth of narcotics, 16 weapons, 5 vehicles and \$24,000 in US Currency.

Courts

- Of the 1,721 Federal defendants in Virginia during 1998, 47.5% were charged with a drug-related offense. Drug trafficking was the predominant drug related offense, making up 44.5% of the total. The most common drug involved was crack (53.1%) followed by marijuana (14.6%) and powdered cocaine (13.7%).¹²

Corrections

- At yearend 1998 there were 28,560 inmates under the jurisdiction of State or Federal correctional authorities in Virginia.¹³ On January 1, 1997 1,100 inmates were in drug treatment programs. Twenty-four drug dogs were used for drug interdiction in Virginia prisons. The Adult Corrections policy requires that facilities randomly test at least 5 percent of the population each month, and for those who test positive to be tested once per week for a minimum of 90 days.¹⁴
- Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) funds provide for drug treatment services, usually Therapeutic Communities (TCs), in jails and prisons. For 1999, over \$1 million is being provided to the Virginia Department of Corrections for the expansion of capacity in two existing TCs and the start of two new ones in innovative settings. Other RSAT funds are being provided to the Department of Juvenile Justice for that agency's first female TC; and, in collaboration with the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services RSAT funds are being used to support 6 pilot modified TCs in local jails. Other federal funding, from the

Edward Byrne Memorial Program, is used to support a variety of services and programs including residential treatment, aftercare services, drug testing, and community-based planning.¹⁵

Treatment

- During 1997 the State of Virginia recorded a total of 10,620 treatment admissions under SAMHSA's Treatment Episode Data Set. Smoked cocaine made up the majority of illegal drug admissions with 1,920 clients seeking treatment.¹⁶

Drug Admissions in Virginia, 1997

Drug Type	Admissions
Alcohol	2,369
Alcohol w/ secondary drug	2,120
Heroin	951
Cocaine (smoked)	1,920
Cocaine (other route)	278
Marijuana/hashish	1,498
Methamphetamine	69
Total admissions	10,620

Sources

¹ U.S. Census Bureau Web site: <http://www.census.gov>

² State of Virginia Web site: <http://www.state.va.us>

³ ONDCP Web site: www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov

⁴ State of Virginia Web site: <http://www.state.va.us>

⁵ Virginia Exile Web site: <http://www.virginiaexile.com/>

⁶ FBI *Crime in the United States* 1998, October 1999

⁷ Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services, *Crime in the Commonwealth* 1988-1998, 1999

⁸ U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Agency, *Domestic Cannabis Eradication/Suppression Program*, 1997.

⁹ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Drug Abuse Warning Network Annual Medical Examiner Data* 1998, 2000

¹⁰ FBI *Crime in the United States*, October 1998

¹¹ Virginia State Police Web site: <http://www.vsp.state.va.us/vsp.html>

¹² US Sentencing Commission Web site: <http://www.ussc.gov/>

¹³ Bureau of Justice Statistics *Prisoners in 1998* August 1999

¹⁴ Corrections Program Office, *State Efforts to Reduce Substance Abuse Among Offenders*, October 1998

¹⁵ Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services Web site:

http://www.dcjs.state.va.us/corrections/what_we_do.htm

¹⁶ Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, *Treatment Episode Data Set (TEDS) 1992-1997: National Admissions to Substance Abuse Treatment Services*, August 1999

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